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much property destroyed, and many slaves set at liberty. It brought accounts of famine in the upper part of Soudan, war in Bambara, and other fearful-sounding tales. I would listen to none; but, alas! my people would, and no persuasions could get them to start: all was stopped. I now determined upon going to the tents of the Dummanies, and trying what could be done with them, or the people of Akka, but I regret to say with no better success.

“It is decided that I had better remain here for two months, as the war that has resulted from the attack on the Cafilas has set all the tribes at variance; no day has passed for the last fortnight without some engagement, the places are filled with wounded, I have to attend them all, and hope at last I shall make friends enough to carry my point successfully. Sheik Beyrook tells me that my detention here will not cause any delay in getting through the country: the only difference is, that I am stopping here during the rainy season, in which no one can travel in Soudan, instead of in the tents of the Dummanies. By the 1st of October at latest I hope to have actually started on my journey.”

VIII.—*Latest Accounts from Australia.*

No very recent accounts of the progress of discovery in Australia have reached this country since the Surveyor-General Major Mitchell's official letter, addressed to the Colonial Secretary, detailing the circumstance of his excursion to explore the course of the Darling, behind the colony of New South Wales. This letter has also a painful interest attached to it, as relating the melancholy loss of Mr. Cunningham, the Colonial Botanist, who wandered from the party on the 17th April, 1835, and has not since been heard of.

“*Camp, West of Harvey's Range,
4th September, 1835.*”

“SIR,—I have the honour to submit, for the information of his Excellency the Governor, the following report of the progress of the party, and result of the expedition, which his Excellency was pleased to place under my command, for the purpose of exploring the course of the river Darling.

“Having joined this party at Buree on the 5th of April, I reconnoitred the country on the following day; and on the 7th we proceeded, by a route not hitherto explored, to that part of the Darling specified in my instructions. My plan was to proceed along the high ground between the rivers Lachlan and Macquarie; and which extended farther into the interior than had been explored. Thus I hoped to avoid the necessity for crossing any rivers, or incurring any risk of

delay from floods, such as those which formerly, at the same season of the year, impeded the progress of the late Surveyor-General. Another object I had in view in choosing this route was, to extend my trigonometrical survey as far as possible along these heights into the interior.

"By this line we reached the river Darling, near the junction of New Year's Creek, in thirty-one days' travelling from Buree; having found the country so favourable that it was never necessary to unload a dray or cut a way through scrub, or to pass a night without water. On my right I had the waters of the Bogan, and on my left a connected chain of heights, whereof New Year's Range is the last.

"But a grievous misfortune befel the expedition in the loss of Mr. Cunningham, the Colonial Botanist, who wandered from the party near the head of the river Bogan on the 17th of April. After an anxious search, continued for twelve days, during which the party halted, his horse was traced till found dead, having still the saddle on, and the bridle in its mouth. It appeared that Mr. Cunningham, after losing his horse, had directed his own steps northward; we traced them into the Bogan, and westward along the bed of that river for twenty miles, and until they disappeared near a recent encampment of natives. There a small portion of the skirt of his coat was found, also some fragments of a map which I had seen in his possession. There were two distinct tribes of natives on the Bogan; but from those with whom we had communication we could learn nothing of his fate. I have ever since indulged a hope that he might have crossed to the Macquarie, and so returned to the settled districts; but this hope has not relieved me much from the most painful apprehensions, considering the disposition of the natives. Whether Mr. Cunningham really survives or not, his absence has made a melancholy blank in our party, and has certainly caused a serious loss to science.

"We found the interior country parched by such excessive drought, that the swamp under Oxley's Table-Land, mentioned by Captain Sturt, was completely dry, and only a few ponds remained in the river Bogan (which is the New Year's Creek of that traveller). Indeed, for 300 miles below that creek we drank no other water than that of the Darling. In this river there was a slight current, the quantity flowing in rapids being about as much as might be required to turn a mill. The water was in all parts as transparent as that of the purest spring well; and it entirely lost all brackish taste below an extreme point of Dunlop's Range, where a hill consisting of a very hard breccia closes on the river so as to separate the plains above it from those lower down. The taste of the water was worst where the river is nearest to D'Urban's Group: above that, at the junction of New Year's Creek, and for seventeen miles from thence downwards, it was excellent.

"When the party first arrived on the Darling, I was induced, from the favourable appearance of the reaches, to try at what rate I might proceed on the river with the boats. It was necessary to rest and refresh the cattle after so long a journey, even had I possessed no other means of proceeding farther. That part of the river bank which I

fixed on for the depôt is situated about twelve miles below the junction of New Year's Creek; the position was naturally good, overhanging the river, and commanding a good run for the cattle; but I strengthened it as a place of defence against the natives, by cutting down the few trees on it, and erecting a block-house large enough to contain all our stores and equipment.

"On the 1st of June (the sixth day after our arrival) I proceeded down the river in the boats, with the greater portion of the party; and on the following day we returned to the fort, having found too many shallow and rocky places in the river to admit of our making such progress as was necessary to enable us to accomplish the object of the expedition.

"Having next ascertained, by a reconnoissance I made as far as Dunlop's Range, with a party on horseback, that the water below was good, and the country not unfavourable to our further journey by land, we evacuated the depôt on the 8th of June (the cattle having then rested two weeks) and proceeded along the left bank of the Darling.

"As the cattle became weaker, the country, as we descended, became much more difficult for them to travel upon. It consisted chiefly of plains of naked earth too soft to retain roots, yet just tenacious enough to open in deep cracks, across which it was not always safe to ride. Impassable hollows (covered with *Polygonum juncium*) at length skirted the river so extensively, that we could seldom encamp within a mile of it, and sometimes not within three. Still we could not have existed there without the river, which contained the only water, and had on its banks the only grass for our cattle; consequently it was necessary to send a separate party to remain with the cattle at the river, generally in the presence of natives, and it required the utmost vigilance on the part of these men every night to prevent cattle getting bogged in the soft mud of the banks.

"I had proceeded thus about 300 miles down the Darling, when the weakness of the bullocks, and the reduced state of our provisions, obliged me to consider the expediency of going forward with a small party only, and at a faster rate, while the exhausted cattle might, in the mean time, be refreshing for the homeward journey. But before deciding on the separation of the party, in the presence of several powerful tribes of natives, I halted it to rest the animals, while some preparations were going forward for setting out. In two days I was convinced, from the movements I observed amongst the native tribes, that in proceeding farther at so great a risk of compromising the safety of the stationary party, I should have acted contrary to the 9th Article of his Excellency's instructions, and thereupon I abandoned the intention.

"The track of our drays had formed a road, which was much easier for the cattle in returning, so that by short marches, and occasional rests, while I explored the country on each side, we reached the former depôt on the 10th of August, having lost only six of the bul-

locks, these having either got fast in the mud of the river, or lain down exhausted and unable again to rise.

"The interior of the country, westward of the Darling, is diversified with detached groups of hills, and low ranges broken into portions resembling islands; but the general aspect thereof afforded no indication of its having then any water on its surface. From two different hills, each about twelve miles west of the Darling, and distant from each other about seventy miles, I obtained extensive views across the country; but from neither of these heights could I perceive any smoke, or even any appearance of trees, the whole country being covered with one kind of bush, forming a thick scrub, with intervals rather more open, but strewn with smaller bushes. During the four winter months just passed, no clouds gathered to any particular point of that horizon: no rain has fallen, neither has there been any dew, and the winds from the west and north-west, hot and parching, seemed to blow over a region in which no humidity remained.

"The Darling did not, in a course of 300 miles, receive a single river or chain of ponds from either side. Such was the extent of the plains on its banks, and the depth and absorbent quality of the soil, that much of the waters of high floods appear to be retained therein, besides all the drainage from the back country. Thus the springs appear to be supplied, by which the river is sustained during the present season of drought. These absorbent plains extend to about five miles, on an average, from the river on each side; hills of soft red sand bound them, and recede about three miles farther. Undulations of diluvial gravel (of a very hard siliceous breccia) succeed, and skirt the base of the heights, which generally consist of primary sandstone.

"The country eastward of the river rises gradually backwards towards the hills, by which I advanced to the Darling. There the higher grounds are more connected, and send down chains of ponds, which appear to be absorbed in the plains. The same kind of bush, however, covers the first region of high ground back from the Darling on both sides; and the character of features, and direction of valleys, were not very apparent from heights near this river.

"The general course of the Darling, as far as I had explored it (which was to the latitude of the head of Spencer's Gulf), is somewhat to the west of south-west (variation $8^{\circ} 27'$). This would tend to the westward of the head of Gulf St. Vincent, if the longitude of the Upper Darling were correct: but I make the longitude of that river, on the parallel of 30° S., nearly a degree more to the eastward; and from that longitude the general course tends much more nearly towards the supposed junction below, although still considerably to the west of that point, as laid down on maps.

"Having measured the whole of our route, and surveyed the country, as I proceeded, in continuation of my general survey of the colony, I had thereby the means of ascertaining the longitude of points connected therewith. Thus I place—

	Lat. S.	Long. E.
New Year's Range (clear hill) in	30° 27' 45"	146° 53' 00"
Oxley's Table-Land (south side)	30 11 15	146 16 9
D'Urban's Group (high south hill)	30 34 40	145 43 30
Fort Bourke	30 7 4	145 52 12

The last mentioned, being an important station, accessible at all seasons by the line of the Bogan, and available for carrying the survey into the more remote country, I have taken the liberty to distinguish with the name of his Excellency the Governor, under whose orders the survey of the colony has been connected with the geography of the interior.

"From Fort Bourke I continued the survey of the Darling, by actual measurement, corrected by intersecting distant points, and also by observations of latitude, to the termination of my journey in latitude 32° 24' 20" S.; and I make the longitude of that point, as deduced from this survey, 142° 24' 26" E.

"Having ascertained the most westerly of the two creeks crossed by Captain Sturt on his journey beyond the Macquarie to be the Bogan, and being desirous to discover the origin of the other, named Duck Creek, I sent Mr. Larmer last week to survey it. Mr. Larmer returned yesterday from the Macquarie, having traced Duck Creek upwards to a large lagoon on the margin of that river, from which other lagoons and channels also lead into this creek. Mr. Larmer found in Duck Creek extensive reaches of excellent water; but the bed of the Macquarie was dry where he made it. Thus it appears that, as the dip of the whole country is to the westward, the surplus waters of the Macquarie are conveyed to the Darling by Duck Creek, a separate channel altogether to the westward of the marshes.

"I have much satisfaction in stating that no men could have been animated with a better spirit than those of this party have been for the accomplishment of the object of this expedition. Our long journey proceeded with equal regularity and security. No cattle were allowed to stray and retard it, and both these and the camp have been vigilantly guarded and watched every night. The patient forbearance and good-will of the men towards the aboriginal natives deserve my highest praise; and certainly not less their courage when circumstances called it forth. This was most conspicuous when exposed almost singly to the savage natives, as they often were from necessity when watching the cattle on the Darling.

"I have to add that our provisions are scarcely sufficient to supply the party until it reaches Buree; also that one man is dangerously ill, and another unable to walk, from scurvy.

"I trust my humble testimony of the services these men have rendered under perilous circumstances, in expiation of the errors of the past, and with the best hopes and intentions respecting the future, will be favourably received by his Excellency the Governor.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your most obedient Servant,

"T. L. MITCHELL,

"Surveyor-General."

By later accounts from Sydney, dated Dec. 22, 1835, we learn that a party of police having been sent to ascertain the fate of the late colonial botanist, Mr. Cunningham, they learned from some natives that a white man had been murdered on the Bogan, and succeeded in reaching the tribe of natives encamped on the borders of a small lake named *Budda*; three men of which were acknowledged as the murderers, and who were accordingly made prisoners. The natives stated, that about six moons since a white man on the Bogan came up to them and made signs that he was hungry—they gave him food and lodging for the night; the white man repeatedly getting up during the night excited suspicion, and they determined to destroy him, which determination they carried into effect the following morning. The officer in command of the police then desired to be conducted to the spot on which the murder had taken place,—which was at the distance of three days' journey, at a place called *Currindine*, where they pointed out some bones, which they asserted to be those of a white man; and near to the spot were found a piece of a coat, and also of a Manilla hat. Being thus convinced of the truth of their statement, and of the spot where the melancholy event had occurred, the officer, Lieut. Zouch, had all the remains collected and deposited in the ground, raised a small mound over them, and barked some of the nearest trees as the only means in his power to mark the spot. The murderers are in custody for trial.

Thus there can be no longer any doubt that Mr. Cunningham has fallen a victim to his zeal in pursuit of his favourite study. He was a zealous and enterprising botanist,—a warm-hearted friend and a good man,—and his loss is much regretted in the colony of New South Wales.

By the last accounts received, on the 1st August, we further learn that an exploring party, under Major Mitchell, the Surveyor-General, consisting of twenty-four persons, had again left Sydney, on the 15th March, 1836, for the interior, to finish the tracing of the Darling, and upon reaching the Murray, into which there is little doubt the river Darling falls, to return by the Murray to the located parts of the colony. Sturt, it will be remembered, entered the Murray from the Morumbidgee, and no part of the former river above that junction has been traced, unless it should have happened that Messrs. Hume and Hovell crossed upon it in 1824. If the instructions with which the Surveyor-General is furnished be successfully executed, a considerable addition will be made to the geography of the colony in the direction which it is most useful to explore. There is reason to believe that the country on both banks of the Murray, and generally between the Australian Alps and the Morumbidgee, contains fine pastoral tracts,

well watered by streams issuing from these mountains, whose summits, in one part, are usually covered with snow. The eastern side of these mountains is already celebrated as an admirable grazing country. The downs near Fort Philip have lately become well known for the excellent pasture they afford to sheep. The course pursued by Hovell and Hume in 1824 discovered a great extent of rich land. The general feature and character of the vast extent of country contained within the course of the Morrumbidgee and the sea by Lake Alexandrina, by Wilson's Promontory and Cape Howe, to the 36th parallel of latitude on the east coast of New Holland, may be, in a great measure, finally determined by this expedition. In like manner, the geographical knowledge of a large portion of country to the northward of the Morrumbidgee will have been completed, by tracing the Bogan into the Darling, and the Darling into the Murray.

IX.—*New Strait at the South-western extremity of New Guinea.*

THE Java Gazette, of September 1835, mentions the discovery of a new Strait in the island of New Guinea.—It appears, that as far back as the year 1826 the Dutch Colonial Minister sent Lieutenant Kolff, of the Dourga, to examine these coasts; who reported, that a river, as he supposed, existed about eighty miles to the eastward of Cape Walsh, the south-western extreme of Papua, or New Guinea. In 1828 a second expedition was sent, and the commander of it reported, that the river of Lieutenant Kolff proved to be a strait. In April 1835, the schooner Postilion, commanded by Lieutenant Langenberg Kool, was sent to decide the question; who, on his return, confirmed the latter opinion, and gave the position of the western point of the Strait in 7° 26' South latitude, 138° 44' longitude East of Greenwich; and that therefore Cape Walsh is no part of the large island, or almost continent, of New Guinea. The strait has been named after the Princess Marianne—the island after the young prince, Frederic Henry—and Lieutenants Kolff and Kool have given their names respectively to the north and south points of the island. Thus another atom of information is added to the balance against our utter ignorance of the shores as well as the interior of this vast island, extending from the Equator to 10° South latitude, and reaching in a N.W. and S.E. direction not less than 1200 geographical miles, or double the length of the British islands; of which, since its first discovery in 1527, and its re-discovery by Dampier in 1700, we have hardly attained any knowledge worth speaking of.
